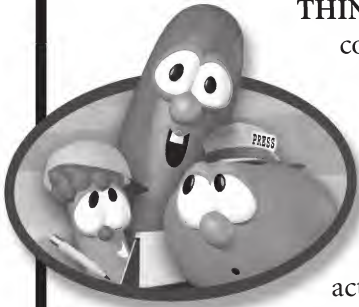


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Undercover Reporter Time Machine Blows a Fuse



THINK—LINK—ACT are undercover reporters who join people in Bible times to give reports to *VeggieConnections* readers. How do they do that, you ask? Glad you did! They use a time machine and go back to the years these events actually happened. However, this week they had a little problem.

THINK—LINK—ACT decided to go back in time to the beginning of God . . . but their time machine began to smoke, shake, shimmy, and finally . . . blew

a fuse! **THINK** began looking into the cause, and discovered that God is eternal . . . in other words, he has no beginning or end. **LINK** said “Oh, that’s why the time machine malfunctioned. It couldn’t **FIND** the beginning of God because there **IS** no beginning to God.” **ACT** promptly began repairs on the time machine, because it is needed again next week!

ACT explained that Jesus is also eternal, but he became human for a short time to show God’s love and forgiveness. And anyone who believes in Jesus receives eternal life, **ACT** excitedly reports.

Bob and Larry’s Fabulous Family Fun

Chocolate O’s Chocolate-covered pretzels can help you remember that God is eternal. Gather circle-shaped pretzels, white or dark chocolate, and round, candy-coated chocolate candies. Melt the chocolate in a heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. Place the pretzels in rows on a cookie sheet lined with wax paper. Carefully spoon melted chocolate over pretzels. Before the chocolate has cooled, place a round chocolate candy in the middle of the circle. Once cooled, place some chocolate pretzels in a bag. Tie the bag with curling ribbon.

Sometimes we **THINK** that everyone knows that God is eternal. Ask your family how you can **ACT** in the knowledge that you can now **LINK** in your minds that God is eternal. Add a card to your chocolate pretzel bag that says, “God is eternal.” And pass the bags out to friends and family.

Recycled Cookie Sheet Try this new use for an old item. Grab an old cookie sheet and turn it into a family time message board. Paint the sheet with chalkboard paint (available at craft and hardware stores). Allow it to dry. Once done, add pictures of each person’s favorite type of candy. On the board,

write out the Unit Memory Verse, Psalm 90:12, “*Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*” As a family, talk about different ways you can spend time connecting with God during the week. Encourage one other to memorize the Bible verse together. Place the board where everyone will be able to see it. If everyone in the family memorizes the verse, plan a special dessert using everyone’s favorite candy!

Carbon Dating Breakdown Leading scientists who work with carbon dating are perplexed by the inability to date the age of God. John the Disciple, claims that this is because God is eternal. He had no beginning and he will have no ending.

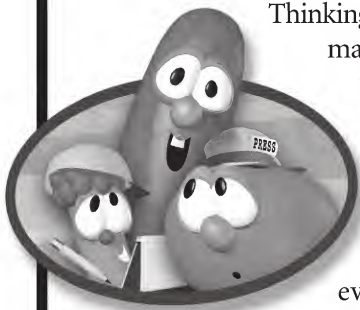
Undercover Reporters Repairing Equipment

THINK — LINK — ACT are working around the clock to repair their time machine. **THINK** points out that the time machine is very delicate equipment, and needs to be treated with care. **LINK** realizes that there is only a week until the next issue of *VeggieConnections*, so time is of the utmost importance. Next week they hope to discover more about John’s teaching that is essential to Christian life.

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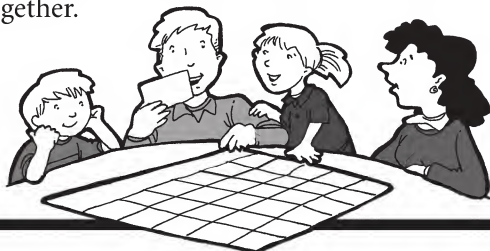
Undercover Reporters' Time Travel is Postponed



Thinking they had repaired their time machine after last week's debacle, undercover reporters, THINK—LINK—ACT climbed into their contraption. Their plan was to travel back to Bible times to learn more about the Holy Spirit. However, when they stepped out of their machine they realized that they had not gone anywhere. It turns out that the Holy Spirit is with us today just as much as in Bible times. "That's really exciting!" exclaimed THINK. "The Holy Spirit is with us all the time," LINK added.

Bob and Larry's Fabulous Family Fun

"Time-to-Connect" Family Activities Time is needed whenever we want to connect in our relationships with God and our families. Sit at the kitchen table together. Have available a calendar and pencils and paper. Set a timer for two minutes. Let each family member plan out a family activity. After the two minutes are up, have each person share the activity they planned. As a family, choose one of the activities to do during the upcoming week, giving each person a job as they connect and spend time together.



Family Dates Put the names of all family members on pieces of paper. Have each family member choose a name, but don't reveal whose name was selected. Challenge each person to find time in the upcoming week to spend time with just that family member. Ask someone to play a board game, offer to ride with Mom or Dad on an errand, read a book or magazine with your sibling. To keep each other guessing, ask more than one family member to spend time together. At the end of the week see if you can guess who drew your name. As an end-of-the-week activity, gather together in prayer thanking God for each other and the relationships you have with God and within your family. Celebrate what God is doing in your family's lives by building a huge ice cream sundae that everyone can share.

Bunny Factory Touts Teamwork

A mishap at the Chocolate Factory has created a new business sensation. The chocolate melting furnaces overheated and exploded, spewing melted chocolate over all the workers. As the melted chocolate hardened, many workers became stuck together in the chocolate coating. Soon, Mr. Nezzzer noticed that bunny production was up. It seems that these "stuck together" workers were learning how to work together better and faster. Bob the Tomato noted that this was not surprising, as it is much like how the Holy Spirit helps us. Larry the Cucumber said, "I get it! The Holy Spirit 'sticks' with us all the time and helps make our Christian life much sweeter."

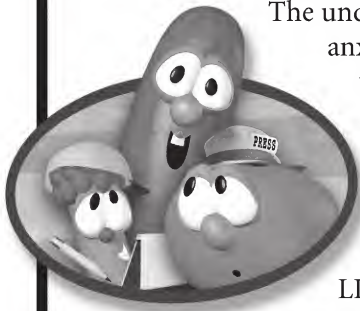
Undercover Reporter Team Planning Next Outing

The undercover reporters expect their time machine to be very useful next week. Be sure to check out the next issue of *VeggieConnections* to see if they are right.

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Undercover Reporters Discover a New Light



The undercover reporters were very anxious to get the time machine working for their next journey. THINK reports, “The lights on the machine were not yet working, but we decided we would try to go anyway. We thought it might be a problem.”

LINK noted, “We weren’t sure we could time travel in the dark, but it turned out that we were worried about the wrong kind of light.” ACT added, that in his first letter, John was teaching about walking in God’s light. “We learned that when we make time to spend with God we are walking in the light.”

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Are your toes smashed and your shins bruised? Tired of bumping into things in the dark? Step into the light! Spend time with God. Don’t know how to start? All you have to do is ask. Read his Word, the Bible, and light will begin to fill your being. Remember the wise words from James 4:8, “*Come near to God and he will come near to you.*” That’s a promise guaranteed for eternity.

Bob and Larry’s Fabulous Family Fun

Flashlight Hide-and-Seek Play a fun version of hide-and-seek to help illustrate the point that when we spend time with God, he will shine his light on our life. Hide a stuffed animal somewhere in the house. Turn most of the lights off, and tell the kids that they have five minutes to locate the stuffed animal. They must use flashlights to find it. They can ask as many questions as they like to help them locate the stuffed animal. Play until the stuffed animal is found. Talk about what it means to be hidden and in darkness (to choose to do wrong things). Then ask what it means to live in the light (to choose to obey the Bible’s teachings). Ask yourselves, how can we, as a family, choose to live in the light and spend time with Jesus?



Candlelight Time with God Spend a quiet night with candlelight. Decide to turn off the lights and spend the evening in candlelight. Ask if there are any issues that have been “in darkness,” any problems that need to be talked about in the light. If so, spend time with each other and work out solutions to the problems. If not, turn on some praise music and worship God together by candlelight.

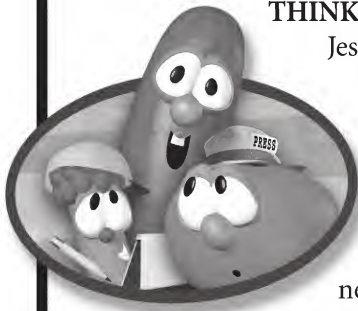
Undercover Reporters Give a Green Thumbs-Up

Next week our reporters will learn about growing things with Jesus, the master gardener. Check the next *VeggieConnections* to see if THINK — LINK — ACT have green thumbs, or if they are all thumbs!

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Undercover Reporters Go Green



THINK—**LINK**—**ACT** report how Jesus taught about spiritual priorities using a gardening lesson. “Jesus taught about the vine and the branches,” **THINK** reports. “We are like branches and Jesus is the vine.” **LINK** added, “When we stay connected to Jesus, we are spiritually healthy, just like branches are healthy when connected to the vine.” **ACT** also noted how excited he was that the time machine took them to the time of Jesus’ ministry. “It was amazing to hear Jesus teach,” he added.

Gardens Not Producing Fruit

Don’t get cut off! Local gardeners experienced a problem with their vines. Many have not been producing fruit. The result? Branches have been cut off. Make sure this doesn’t happen to you! Set godly priorities with your time. Stay connected to God through a powerful relationship. Remember the wise words of the psalmist: *“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom,”* Psalm 90:12.



Bob and Larry’s Fabulous Family Fun

Sweet Priorities For this priority-testing activity you will need the ingredients to make one batch of chocolate chip cookies. Make about 3/4 of the cookie dough according to the recipe, but prepare the other 1/4 of the dough without sugar. Bake according to the directions.

Once the cookies are cooled, set the unsweetened ones on one plate, and prepare an equal size plate of the sweetened cookies. Ask each family member to take and eat a cookie from each plate.

Talk about how making time with God a priority is like making cookies by the recipe. Just as you don’t want to eat a cookie that is not made right, if you try to live without making God a priority your days don’t go right.

Talk as a family about how you can set godly priorities together. Name some godly priorities that you want to establish as a family. You may choose to write them down on paper and put in a place where everyone can see them. If everyone knows their priorities, they will be able to connect together as a family and to God.



Undercover Reporters Bombarded by Smell

Next week reporters **THINK** — **LINK** — **ACT** are off to see one of Jesus’ most amazing miracles. But they are a little worried about the smell. Check out the next *VeggieConnections* to hear (and smell) the details!

Family Photo Vine To help remind everyone to stay connected to Jesus, the vine, make a family photo vine. You will need 20-gauge wire, wire cutters, large circle punch, hole punch, craft paper, glue, paper clips, pictures of each family member and two nails. Make the family project a priority for everyone by giving each member a job to do. Cut the 20-gauge wire into three 2' lengths. Twist the three pieces of wire together to form the vine. Use the craft paper to cut out leaves. Choose one picture of each family member and cut it out using the large circle punch. Punch out additional circles from the craft paper. Create grape bunches by gluing several

pictures and circles together. Punch a hole on the top of the grapes. Thread a paper clip through the grapes and attach it to the vine. Repeat this for each family member or for as many pictures and circles as you have. Hang in a prominent place. Label the vine with "Jesus" or his words "I am the Vine."

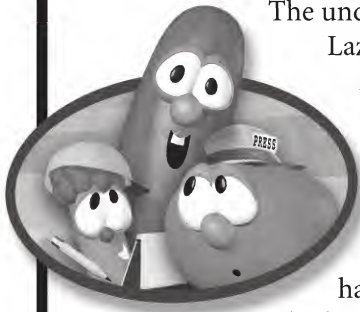
As you work on this project, talk about what it means to set godly priorities. Ask for one priority that each family member can set. Close the time with prayer and asking God to help you, as a family, to stay connected through a powerful relationship with God.



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Dead Man Walkin'



The undercover reporters report that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, is a walking miracle.

ACT reports that Lazarus had died after being sick. His sisters buried him in the family cave. LINK noted that Jesus came four days after Lazarus had died, even though the sisters

had asked for Jesus to come and heal him. The sisters were happy to see Jesus, and they all went to the tomb together to mourn. Jesus pointed out that Lazarus would live again, and asked for the stone of the tomb to be rolled away. Martha reminded Jesus that Lazarus had been buried for four days already, so it would smell bad. THINK exclaimed, "Yeah, I was holding my nose! But, when Jesus called to Lazarus, he walked out of the tomb, still in his burial wrappings!" The sisters learned an important lesson about God's timing. That it is always perfect, even if we don't understand it.

Public-Service Announcement

Alive Again Sleepover

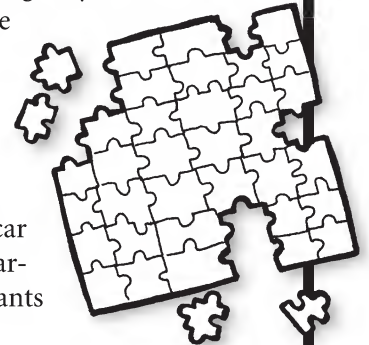
Mary and Martha invite the whole town of Bethany to come to a stay-up-all-night sleepover! Since our brother Lazarus spent four days sleeping (OK, he was dead), he's in no mood for sleeping! Bring your favorite party games and join the fun!

Bob and Larry's Fabulous Family Fun

Lazarus Lives! Read through the Bible story found in John 11:1–43. Have each family member choose to be one of the characters in the story. Act out the story. Then use the following questions to talk about the story.

- How did Mary and Martha respond when they knew that Lazarus was dead?
- How did Jesus respond to hearing his friend Lazarus was dead?
- Why did Jesus wait to help them?
- Would you have trusted Jesus to help? Why or why not?
- What are some things in your life that you need to trust Jesus about?
- How can you learn to trust in God's timing?

Family Time Learning to trust in someone else's timing can be difficult. In this fast-paced world it is becoming ever more difficult for both kids and parents to learn to wait for something they think is important. As a family, choose to make something that will take time to complete. Here are several options to choose from: make soup from scratch, make bread from scratch, put a puzzle together, build a model car or airplane, or create a flower garden and wait patiently as the plants begin to grow.



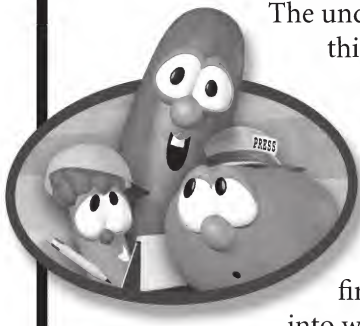
Undercover Reporters Witness Amazing Miracles

The reporters are back with Jesus next week as they see him perform three awesome miracles. THINK will be at a wedding with Jesus. But you'll have to check out the next *VeggieConnections* to find out about LINK and ACT!

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Miracles All Around!



The undercover reporters split up for this assignment. THINK went to a wedding feast in Cana. He noticed a very nervous banquet master when they ran out of wine, which was an embarrassment to the wedding planners. Jesus did his first miracle, changing water into wine.

LINK was with Jesus when an official asked Jesus to heal his very sick son. Jesus told the man his son would live. As the man returned home, his servants

came out to tell him his son was well. And it happened at the exact time Jesus spoke the words!

ACT brought his swimming trunks with him when he heard he was going to the pool of Bethesda. He was surprised to find the pool area full of disabled people. But ACT was more surprised by a miracle Jesus performed. Jesus healed a man who couldn't walk for thirty-eight years!

The three reporters all caught up with each other and said together, "Jesus helped so many people. He always used his time wisely. And we will try to do the same!"

Bob and Larry's Fabulous Family Fun

Family Prayer Jar For this activity, you will need a large jar, slips of paper, and a pen or pencil. Gather your family and tell them that you are going to create a prayer jar. Any time one of the family members has something he or she would like the family to pray about, that person will write it on the slip of paper and place it in the jar. Each day at dinner (or whichever meals works best), bring the prayer jar to the table. Pull out the slip of paper, read the request, and spend a few minutes praying for each request. Be sure to write down the day of the prayer. Check back on the prayer requests. As you see prayers being answered, write down the day you know it was answered. Then spend time praising God for answered prayer!

Time without TV As a family, decide what you spend a lot of time on. Keep track of that time. For example, make a chart and track how much TV the family watches over a week. Once the time is calculated, determine to turn the TV off and devote that same amount of time to things you can do for or with other people. You could choose things ranging from volunteering at a nursing home to playing

board games as a family.

Veggie Top Ten Fun Time Tips Mr. Nezzar and his Veggie friends have come up with a Veggie fun time list just for fun!

10. Don't eat too much chocolate
9. Don't buy too much stuff at StuffMart
8. Don't be a pirate who doesn't do anything
7. Sing your silly songs in the shower
6. Always know where your hairbrush is
5. Prop up your sheep so they don't tip over
4. Keep all your rubber duckies in a row
3. Listen carefully with your super-suction ears
2. Watch Frankencelery movies only with your mom
1. Sing the "New and Improved" Bunny Song

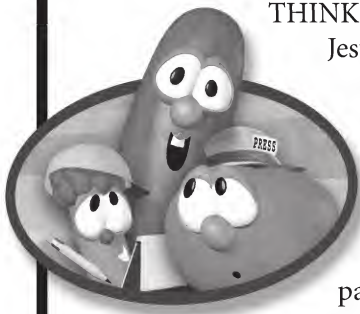
Undercover Reporters Visit Lonely Woman

The reporters investigate a well, a thirsty woman, and what happens when Jesus talks to the woman. But ACT was still wondering if he could go swimming. Huh? Your next *VeggieConnections* will sort out the watery truth. Don't miss it!

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Undercover Reporters Follow Jesus



THINK reports the reporters watched Jesus talk to a lonely woman by a well. This woman had made many bad choices in her life. Jesus talked to her about living water—water that would give eternal life. Jesus told the woman about her sinful past, and she believed in Jesus.

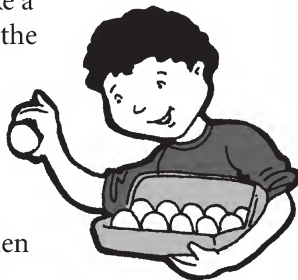
LINK added that this woman went into her town and told the people

about Jesus. Because she shared Jesus, many people in her town believed.

When ACT had heard the reporters were going to be hearing Jesus talk about living water, he brought his trunks and towel. Although he wasn't able to go swimming, he said "Having Jesus give me living water and eternal life is way more important than going swimming. I'm telling all my friends about Jesus—and you should too!"

Bob and Larry's Fabulous Family Fun

What Does Sharing Smell Like? Looking for times to share God's Word with others can be a challenge. But when it happens, it is like a sweet fragrance to God. Put the following items in a box: orange, vanilla, onion, chocolate, pepper, egg, cheese, and vinegar. Test each family members' nose by blindfolding them and then see if they can figure out the smell. Then talk about how you can look for times to be a sweet fragrance in someone's life by sharing God's Word with him or her.



Sharing Living Water As a family, decide to be like Jesus and share some water with others. Buy bottled water. Create a new label on the bottle that says a favorite verse or one reason why you're friends with Jesus. Choose a day to head outside and pass out the free water to those who need it. You could choose to go on a bike trail, a parade, or county fair. Look for times to share God's Word with others.

Mr. Lunt's Recipe for Success

Are you looking for times to share God's Word? You have to eat, don't you?! Take a friend out and share God's Word with them while enjoying a cheeseburger!

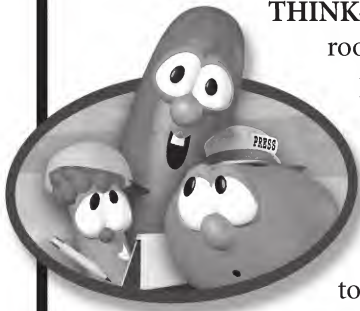
Undercover Reporters Get Their Feet Wet

The reporters again join Jesus and the disciples. Here they see a unique way Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson in following him. Check out the next *VeggieConnections* to find out what Jesus did!

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Undercover Reporters Get Their Feet Wet



THINK—LINK—ACT snuck into the room where Jesus and his disciples were eating. “It was amazing,” THINK reports, “Jesus wrapped a towel around himself and began to wash the disciples’ dirty, smelly feet!” LINK reports he was shocked to see Jesus take the role of a servant. And Peter was too. He refused

to let Jesus wash his feet at first. But Jesus explained to Peter, and the other disciples, that he was setting an example of serving that they were to follow. ACT reveals the disciples were challenged by what Jesus was showing them. “And everyone who follows Jesus is just as challenged by this teaching,” ACT added.

Bob and Larry’s Fabulous Family Fun

Somebody’s Gotta Do It! What is the most humbling act of service one family member can do to use their time to serve the others? One suggestion might be to clean the bathroom. Ask families members to take turns cleaning the bathroom. Afterward, talk about how it felt to be the one serving. Remind kids that we need to learn to spend our time serving others.

Weekend Warrior Servants At a family meeting, make a decision to spend a weekend serving someone other than your family. You could serve at a food kitchen, at your church helping with yard work or fix-up projects. Maybe you could help plan a worship service at a nursing home. Put your heads together and see what you can come up with!

Bob’s Mr. Fix-It How-to Column

Dear Bob,

I’m having a hard time figuring out how to serve others. I like the idea, but I just don’t get the step-by-step process. Can you give me some advice?

Signed, Changing My Habits

Dear Habits,

It’s great news that you’re concentrating on changing your habits, especially with how to serve others. Jesus himself taught us to serve others. He showed his disciples that real serving means putting your heart into it, and it often includes doing something we don’t necessarily feel like doing. Jesus got down on his knees and washed his disciples’ dirty feet. That’s our example.

So now, here’s your step-by-step instructions:

1. Look around you for someone who needs a hand.
2. Look for a specific thing they need help with. It doesn’t matter if you don’t like to do it or if something you’re not so good at.
3. Offer to spend some time and energy—and even money—to help out that person. Let the person know you’re serving because you have a connection with God.
4. When you’re done, remember to pray for that person.

Now go give it a try, and put your heart into it!

Signed, Bob

Undercover Reporters Off on Another Secret Mission

THINK — LINK — ACT are completing some minor repairs on their time machine so they can bring you the latest news on another exciting adventure. They know they will get to know more interesting people from the Bible. Next week’s *VeggieConnections* will have all the details. Check it out!